

Madam Speaker,

The bipartisan CHIP Reauthorization Act had the support of over two-thirds of the U.S. Senate, nearly every U-S Governor, and an overwhelming majority of the American people. Unfortunately, it did not have the support of two crucial parties: President Bush who vetoed it and his Republican friends who voted to uphold his veto.

Instead of helping us extend health care to low-income children, the president claims this fully-paid-for bill is excessive spending and instead he proposes to spend just \$5 billion more than we do now on the CHIP program. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the president's plan would lead to more than 800,000 children losing their coverage.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to know how the president and his Republican enablers would determine which 800,000 children lose their coverage. What do they tell the four million kids who are currently eligible for CHIP, but will have no hope of getting this coverage unless our bipartisan bill passes? It is time for Republicans in this body to reject the president's plan to cut health care for children and stand with us in strengthening the CHIP program.

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